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Special Care Will Keep Garden In Shape While Family Vacations

Got those travel folders out yet? Certainly by now you and each member of your family has announced his idea for the family vacation. Perhaps you've already made reservations and have begun to pack. If so, now's the time to prepare your garden for the weeks it will spend alone and without your care.

You may have a good neighbor or regular gardener who will keep up with the garden chores but if you don't there are several pre-vacation measures you can take that will tide your garden over the weeks of your vacation.

Begin your preparations with the lawn. Mow it a day or two before you leave and lay down a light top dressing of peat moss, followed by a thorough soaking. The peat moss will hold the moisture, insulating the roots from drying air. Grass clippings, too, make a natural mulch and conserve moisture. If you have someone to cut the grass while you're away, tell him to leave the clippings on the lawn.

Don't Fertilize
Don't fertilize your lawn before you leave, cautions the California Assn. of Nurserymen, because, the grass will shoot up when fed and the fertilizer plus your absence will mean a tough mowing job

when you return. Lay down a balanced fertilizer after you've returned from your vacation. Your favorite rose shrubs should have special attention, too. Clip off dead blooms and spray or dust with a combination spray for mildew and aphids. Pile up the soil in ridges around the rose beds and water well. Then spread a heaping trowelful of a balanced fertilizer at the base of each plant and soak again.

Water Generously
Flower beds will still be blooming gaily when you return if you have given them a dressing of compost or humus. First, though, cultivate the soil around the plants and water generously before spreading the humus.

Fruit, shade, flowering trees and shrubs will remain in good condition while you're gone if you shape basins around them and soak slowly. After watering fill the basins with grass clippings or compost. Shallow rooted azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons and fuchsias can be kept happy with a heavy mulch of sopping wet peat moss.

When you've done these pre-vacation garden chores you can be fairly sure you'll return from your vacation, rested, relaxed, and cheered by the sight of a garden and lawn in good condition.

Garden Chatter

By LORING BIGELOW

Every so often there is much activity in the advertising media on Zeysia grasses as turf for our Southern California area. Publicity of this sort arouses tremendous interest by the homeowner concerning the use and adaptability of zeysias to his conditions.

First of all these zeysia grasses are not new. They are all native to other parts of the world and were introduced into the United States some 50 years ago. They have been under test at the turfgrass plots at UCLA for several years.

For the most part, zeysia grasses are propagated by stolons and not by seed. There have been extensive plantings of zeysia in the Gulf States, but not too many in our Southern California area.

Meyer zeysia has been selected as the most promising for our area at UCLA. It is rather fine textured for this type of grass, upright in growth and forms a very dense and wear resistant turf. It has a beautiful deep green color during its growing season, and no serious insect or disease troubles have yet been reported as bothering it. Meyer zeysia will withstand cutting as low as 1/4 inch and seldom grows higher than 6 or 8 inches if left unmowed.

In our local areas, this grass starts its dormant period in the latter part of November and remains dormant and dead looking through March. All attempts at UCLA to overseed with a cool season grass for desirable winter color have failed. When Meyer zeysia has been plugged into pure stands of cool season grasses, it has slowly but surely eliminated

the cool season grass in every case thus far tested.

A large planting of this selection on poorly drained soil died out. Also these grasses have been reported as preferring a pH of between 5.5 and 6.5. In alkaline soils the competition from bermuda grass might be too great for zeysias.

It is only fair to the homeowner to know both sides of the "zeysia story." Advertising plays up the desirable side, but makes no mention at all of the possibly undesirable characteristics.

According to C. Gordon Wyckoff, Senior Laboratory Technician, Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture at UCLA, "a turfgrass survey recently completed for the County of Los Angeles conservatively estimated the annual maintenance cost of all turf areas in this county at ninety millions of dollars. In view of this staggering sum, a thorough investigation into the possibilities of zeysias as grasses for this area seems very much in order. Although we cannot now recommend them for more than cautious trial on a small scale, with sufficient breeding and selection, they may well prove to be the grasses of the future."

Kansas Society Plans Mid-Summer Picnic

The Kansas State Society of Long Beach will hold its mid-summer picnic July 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Birby Park, Broadway and Cherry Ave.

All former Jayhawkers are invited to attend the affair. Ruth McGinnis, president, announced this week.

GARDENER'S CHECKLIST

1. This is a good time to plant the delightfully fragrant Bouvardia. This white flowered shrub is particularly fragrant toward evening.
2. To make compact well branched Chrysanthemum plants, the growing tips should be pinched out. Pinch Fall and Winter blooming varieties now for the last time.
3. Plant seeds of perennials and biennials such as Delphinium, Columbine, Coral Bells, fox glove and Canterbury Bells.
4. Black rot fungus on ornamental shrubbery usually indicate the presence of aphids or scale insects.
5. Preparations are now available which will readily kill persistent grasses such as Bermuda grass, Quack grass and Johnson grass.

Fertilize Garden in Summer, Too

Summertime is beguiling time in the garden.

The annuals and perennials are blooming beautifully, the fruit is beginning to ripen on the trees and the roses and other flowering shrubs will never be lovelier. In fact, there's so much growing beauty around it's hard to remember, for a moment, that there's work to be done now, in the form of summer fertilizing.

Many plants, especially annuals and fast-growing shrubs, need a mid-season application of fertilizer. Shrubs that have already bloomed should also be fed now so that they can make strong new growth before winter and develop next Spring's bloom.

To determine the amount of fertilizer needed by each plant look to the plant itself for clues. In general, the California Assn. of Nurserymen says rapid growers need heavy feedings and slow growers, light. Heavy "eaters" are lawns, roses, gardenias, chrysanthemums, fast-growing annuals and perennials. Slow-growing ornamental shrubs like camellias and azaleas take light feeding.

A mid-summer feeding of lawns is recommended, too, so that you can continue to enjoy a cool, green carpet for the remainder of the summer days. Use a complete commercial fertilizer for this mid-summer fertilizing and once a month during the summer months feed lightly with a nitrogenous fertilizer. A good clue to determine when your lawn should be fed—one that you can't possibly miss—is the first sign of grass turning yellow.

Bougainvillea Has Blossoms Of Many Colors

Few vines can put on such a color show for such a long blooming period as the Bougainvillea. The semi-tropical Bougainvillea is one of the most typical California plants and it grows spectacularly throughout the state from desert regions to the seacoast.

The Bougainvillea is an evergreen and practically ever-blooming, too. It makes an especially good planting against a warm wall, fence or side of the house; while it is more climatically suited to Southern California inland and coastal regions, it can be grown successfully in containers in the colder areas of the state.

Cultural requirements of the Bougainvillea are simple: plant in full sun, prune to control overgrowth and feed very generously to maintain a rich soil. Something new in the Bougainvillea family is a bush form of this vine plant. The new variety is called Temple Fire and it grows only three to four feet high with vivid scarlet flowers. Plant it in full sun; it is tender in temperatures below 30 degrees.

There are many brilliant flower shades of Bougainvillea varieties, such as the delicate rose pink of Texas Dawn, the deep rich red of Barbara Karst, the brilliant reddish purple of Purple Bougainvillea and the rich color of California Gold.

Nothing can make a brighter splash of color in your garden growing as a vine or container plant than one of these brilliantly colored Bougainvillea varieties, says the California Assn. of Nurserymen.

Mid-Summer Garden Inventory Is Recommended by Nurserymen

Take a mid-summer inventory of your garden now. Does it need more summer color and do you have fall-flowering plants ready to take over when the summer plants fade? Consider your maintenance requirements. Would it be more convenient to change from annuals that require somewhat more maintenance to perennials and shrubs or natives that require less? In other words, is it time to give your garden a new look?

There are many ways to spruce up your garden. You may want to take up some of the back lawn and extend your gardening area, suggests the California Association of Nurserymen. California natives and several flowering shrubs will add new interest to the back as well as the entrance way to your house.

If you decide to add a "native" or two to your garden family, one favorite selection is the Wild Lilac (Ceanothus) which grows throughout the hills and mountains of California. One of the prettiest species is the Ceanothus cyanus or San Diego Ceanothus for its foliose spikes are violet-blue in hue. Varieties of this species are very good too, such as Mountain Haze, Sierra Blue, La Primavera. Deep blue flowers grow on the Santa Barbara Ceanothus (C. impressus) which is another fine species of this popular native plant.

Another native and a fine selection for the inland valleys of California is the California Grape or Mahonia pinata, cousin to the popular Mahonia aquifolium which it resembles in its frothy branching shrub form. The California Grape will stand heat and drought better than the M. aquifolium and make a fine foundation plant.

White and pinkish funnel-shaped flowers are borne in clusters during spring on the Western Azalea (Rhododendron occidentale). This deciduous plant makes a fine companion of the evergreen Huckleberry.

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